

DECISION PROCESS

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Implementation of the Idaho Transportation Plan

The requirements for the statewide transportation planning process include the development of a statewide intermodal transportation plan (ITP) and a statewide transportation improvement program (STIP). The following is Idaho's approach for establishing and implementing the continuing process and developing a plan. This approach is manageable, builds upon existing practices, and uses available staff resources effectively.

The planning process focuses on integrating current operations and preservation considerations with longer term development and performance concerns. Hence, the ITP and its development process must include alternative financing strategies for meeting needs and a process for measuring success.



The ITP is "performance-based," i.e., performance measures are established for the several objectives and progress is measured towards achieving them. These are fully developed in the management systems and modal plans, which are included as elements of this ITP.

The purpose of the ITP is to guide the planning process and give direction for investing in the transportation system to work towards a desired future. Systems performance objectives and evaluation are the tools by which this is accomplished. There are four components:

- ! Set direction and measurable performance standards (Goals and Objectives),
- ! Assign responsibility and develop planned actions (Transportation Strategies),
- ! Measure performance (System Performance & Evaluation),
- ! Reset direction and performance standards (Adjust Objectives and Strategies).

Since transportation funding may not keep pace with all transportation needs both now and in the future, the ITP is also an investment/performance plan. In the investment/performance process, proposed investments in the system are based on the anticipated performance of the system over time. The process allows the decision-maker to plan investments in the system to achieve anticipated future system service levels for performance and condition.

The ITP is a long-range plan and, by definition, the goals are long-term and far-reaching. Actions to achieve the goals must be taken now and progress towards achievement must be monitored. When progress is monitored, the goals can be adjusted in the future to meet changing requirements. There must be a clear relationship between the long-term goals and the selected system performance objectives. The system performance objectives must be:

- ! Understandable by both transportation providers and customers,
- ! Measurable of progress towards achieving a transportation goal or policy,
- ! Supportable by data or information obtained on a regular basis.

The system performance objectives can be stated in one of two forms:

1. Standards or performance levels stated in federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Two examples of these are the performance levels for air quality and the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act;
2. Statewide goals and objectives which are stated in terms of desirable directions. Examples of these performance objectives are those under development for the respective management systems required by ISTEA.

For the first case, statewide targets will be set for system performance that can be measured by a set standard or performance level. These will be developed from studies of the factors involved, baseline conditions, and expected future conditions. For those standards which have been set by federal and/or state laws and regulations, the applicable target values will be used.

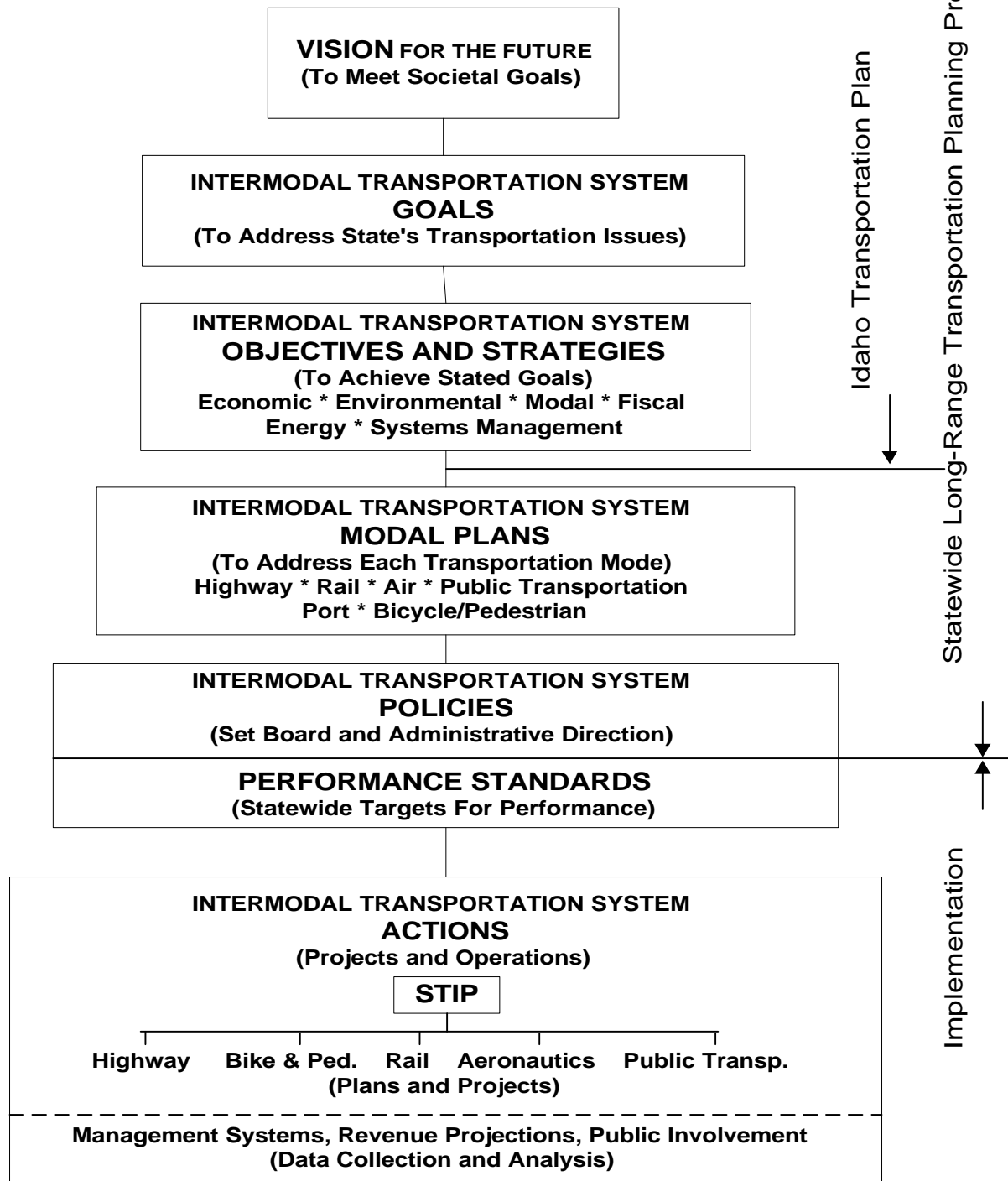
In the second case, broad program goals and funding will be set to guide long-range investments in the system. The six management systems will be used to establish baseline conditions and provide target values for condition and performance to meet the stated goals. The management systems will produce outputs that will help decision-makers identify projects for inclusion in the statewide transportation improvement program and for determining and monitoring progress towards achieving broad program goals.

While the most visible products of the planning process are the statewide and metropolitan intermodal long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs, the continuing analysis of information through the planning process is also a vital product.

Framework of the Planning Process

The planning process provides a framework for the development of the metropolitan and statewide transportation improvement programs. Transportation improvement programs must be consistent with plans. Projects included in the approved metropolitan and statewide transportation improvement programs can be advanced for implementation. Once implemented, these projects constitute the improvements which contribute to system performance enhancements. Exhibit 1 illustrates the relationships between the planning process and the management systems.

EXHIBIT 1 FRAMEWORK OF THE PLANNING PROCESS



- ! The decision process begins with a "vision for the future" that identifies the socio-economic values that the state seeks to attain with the provision of transportation services. The vision sets the desired future that all transportation goals and objectives are directed towards. At this stage, unconstrained long-range improvements are considered together with essential upkeep of the transportation infrastructure. It is the *visionary* stage of long-range planning;
- ! The second step identifies intermodal goals that will guide the process towards achieving the long-range vision. The goals are broad in scope, but they are supported by objectives and strategies to accomplish each goal;
- ! The third step identifies the various objectives and strategies that must be undertaken to attain the desired goals. The objectives are targets for specific actions. They are ordinarily measurable by a quantified or qualified value within a specified time frame. The strategies constitute the action items of the planning process. They provide a "road map" to implement the objectives;
- ! In the fourth step, policies are developed to carry out various elements of the ITP;
- ! In the fifth step, statewide targets for performance are set and long-range funding information is provided to show how future investments in transportation programs can be made. This brings reality into the process and/or the need for public commitment to increased revenues or other necessary courses of action;
- ! In the sixth step, modal plans are developed which conform to the goals, objectives and strategies of the ITP. The individual modal plans provide specific guidance regarding classification of systems, current and projected usage, priorities, service and development standards, and funding;
- ! In the seventh step, needs estimates and revenue projections are made to determine where, what and how much funds should be allocated to various programs. The management systems are used to evaluate various strategies of investment and the level-of-service expected from the selection. The decision-maker sets the performance-objective measures for the various elements from data provided by the technical staff and information obtained from the public participation and involvement processes. A five-year funding plan is prepared to guide the development of the several programs.
- ! In the eighth step, a program of projects (STIP) is selected based on the mix of projects that will meet the objectives and strategies of the ITP within the funding constraints.
- ! In the ninth step, adjustments in the programmed amounts are made in subsequent years as performance is monitored and compared to performance indicators through the continuing planning process. The information is then used to reevaluate the ITP.

System Performance Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the system performance objectives needs to be coordinated with the transportation management systems. The six management systems are now in different stages of development with implementation deadlines ranging from January 1, 1995 to January 1, 1998. Each state must develop and implement a system for managing: 1) highway pavements, 2) bridges, 3) highway safety, 4) traffic congestion, 5) public transportation facilities and systems and, 6) intermodal transportation facilities and systems. In metropolitan areas these systems are to be developed and

implemented in cooperation with the regional transportation planning agencies. In addition, each state is to have a traffic monitoring system that supports each of the management systems.

Each management system complements the other and includes performance measures which address performance from different perspectives and levels of detail. It is important to understand that the management systems are not "decision-makers," but are important tools that supply information for making informed decisions, evaluating their effectiveness over time, and revising investment decisions for the future.

The ITP considers all of the state's transportation systems and system performance at a corridor and statewide level. The baselines and targets for some of the system transportation objectives will be incorporated in the development of the ISTEA management systems.

Transportation Decision Process

The total transportation system within the state of Idaho consists of all those means by which: 1) people move from place to place, 2) goods and products flow in and through the state, 3) services are provided and received and, 4) information is transmitted. The physical system ranges from walkways to fiber optic cables and air waves. Some parts of the system are owned and operated by public agencies (roadways, etc.), much is in the private sector (e.g., freight, rail, airlines, trucking, communications), and some of it is owned and/or operated by a combination of the public and private sector (e.g., AMTRAK, airports, seaport, transit). All of the above are publicly regulated in one manner or another.

So many interests are involved in transportation issues that the overall decision process is difficult to understand. In an effort to improve coordination and decision-making, a comprehensive multi modal transportation planning process is needed which involves all levels of government and the private sector in a cooperative process to develop coordinated transportation plans (Exhibit 2).

